

Language Diversity and Language Universals

LIN306 H1F – Summer 2017

University of Toronto

Instructor: Julie Doner julie.doner@mail.utoronto.ca

Office: SS4086

Office Hours: Wednesday 12:30-2:00, or by appointment

Class Time: Tuesday & Thursday 2-5pm

Location: SS 2111

1. Course Description

This course examines cross-linguistic typological features found in the languages of the world. Special attention is given to describing morphological and syntactic patterns found cross-linguistically. The goal of the course is to explain the range of variation, and to draw on the range of variation in order to uncover language universals. By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Explain several ways in which languages grammatically vary, and support with examples.
- Explain several ways that linguists analyze languages as similar, and support with examples.
- Understand several kinds of language universals, and how they are used to investigate language.
- Read and (attempt to) understand (simple or intermediate) academic articles in syntax, and begin to critically evaluate them.
- Synthesize and present data and argumentation from a variety of sources.
- Make a clear empirical argument, supported with data.
- Make a clear theoretical argument, supported with data.
- Build skills in presenting data in a variety of formats and media (written and oral).

Prerequisites: LIN232 (Syntactic Patterns) or equivalent

2. Requirements and Evaluation

Reading Responses (best 8/9)	10%	<i>every lecture</i>
In-class Writing (best 5/6)	10%	<i>pop quiz style</i>
Research Activity	10%	<i>May 15</i>
Data Reports (x2)	14%	<i>May 22, June 5</i>
Mid-term Test	20%	<i>May 24</i>
Paper Proposal	10%	<i>May 31</i>
Presentation	6%	<i>June 12</i>
Final Paper	20%	<i>June 18</i>

PARTICIPATION

There is no dedicated participation/attendance mark in this course. Instead, participation will be evaluated through reading responses and in-class writing tasks. These are designed to help you

understand and synthesize the material; doing them should help you feel more comfortable participating in class discussion. No extensions or make-ups will be provided for these assignments.

Reading Responses (best 8/9 x 1.25% = 10%): Readings are assigned for most lectures. You are expected to do the assigned required readings and submit a response on Quercus before lecture (no reading response is required before the first class). Responses may be short, and are intended to help you evaluate the reading and your understanding of it, think critically, and develop questions. Your eight best reading response grades will be counted. *Due: at 2:00pm on Quercus the day of the associated lecture*

In-Class Writing (best 5/6 x 2% = 10%): A ~20-minute in-class writing question will be posed in six of the twelve lectures for you to practice your writing skills and engage with the lecture material. You will not know in advance which lectures will have in-class writing. The questions will not have "correct" answers: they will usually ask you to develop an opinion on an issue and structure an argument to support it. They are open-book: it is recommended that you bring readings and notes with you to class so that you may reference them in your response. It is not expected that your answer be polished. Please bring your own lined paper to write on. Your five best in-class writing grades will be counted. *Due: in class*

ASSIGNMENTS

Research Activity (10%): We will go over the instructions for the research activity on the first day of class. For this assignment, you will be expected to find three research papers on a syntactic phenomenon in a language you've never heard of before and answer a few questions based on the title, abstract, and introduction/conclusion of the paper. The purpose of this assignment is to help familiarize you with the diversity of scholarly research available and how to identify appropriate sources, in preparation for writing your final paper. *Due: May 15 at the beginning of class*

Data Reports (2 x 7% = 14%): These assignments will require you to research a language you do not know well and discuss how the language behaves with respect to some grammatical features we talk about in class. It will require you to find linguistic data from sources like grammars, articles, or typological databases, and concisely describe the data and its relevance. The purpose of this assignment is to get you familiar with seeking secondary linguistic sources and analyzing less-familiar language data firsthand, which will help you in writing your final paper. *Due: May 22, June 5 at the beginning of class*

TEST

Mid-term test (20%): The test will be approximately 1 hour long and take place at the beginning of lecture. It will cover content from all prior lectures and readings. The test will be followed by a writing workshop for you to better prepare your paper proposals. *Date: May 24*

There is no final exam.

FINAL PAPER AND RELATED WORK

Paper proposal (10%): The paper proposal has two parts: a research plan describing the topic and goals of your final paper, and an annotated bibliography listing the sources you intend to use and their relevance. *Due: May 31 at the beginning of class*

Presentation (6%): You will be expected to give a brief (3 minute) presentation of one aspect of your final paper. This class will be run like a mini-conference, with session chairs and question periods. *Date: June 12 in class*

Final paper (20%): For the final paper, you will need to describe a grammatical phenomenon in at least two languages other than English and situate it within a theoretical perspective. Your paper should demonstrate that you have met the goals of the course (see page 1 of the syllabus). Maximum 10 pages. *Due: Monday, June 18 at 5:00 pm in the assignment dropbox*

3. Schedule

	<i>Tuesday</i>		<i>Thursday</i>
May 8	Intro to diversity & universals	May 10	Methodologies Read : Davis et al (2014)
May 15	Word order and movement Read: Travis (2006) <i>Due: Research Activity</i>	May 17	Verb inflection and null subjects Read: Barbosa (2011) parts 1 + 2
May 22	Polysynthesis and incorporation Read: Mithun (1992) <i>Due: Data report #1</i>	May 24	MID-TERM TEST Writing Workshop
May 29	Case and ergativity Read: Song (2015)	May 31	Argument structure Read: Kittilä (2010) <i>Due: Paper proposal</i>
June 5	Clitics and wordhood Read: Julien (2002) <i>Due: Data report #2</i>	June 7	Debating Universal Grammar Read: Dabrowska (2015), Boxell (2016)
June 12	PAPER PRESENTATIONS	June 14	Endangerment and revitalization Read: Hinton (2013), Pine & Turin (2017) <i>Due: Final paper (Monday 6/18)</i>

In-class writing will occur throughout the course.

Last day to enroll: May 13
Drop date: June 5

4. Reading List

There is no textbook in this course; we will work from a series of readings. Readings will be uploaded to Quercus wherever possible, and can also be found through the U of T library. One to two main readings are assigned per class (except the first lecture and test/presentation days). You are responsible for reading these before lecture, where they will be discussed.

Make sure to check which pages/sections of each reading you are responsible for. Sometimes subsections are specified. The readings may be amended as the course progresses; if this happens, an announcement will be made on Quercus with advance notice.

Lecture 1 (May 8): Introduction – no readings

Lecture 2 (May 10): Universals and methods

- Davis, Henry, Carrie Gillon, and Lisa Matthewson. 2014. How to investigate linguistic diversity: Lessons from the Pacific Northwest. *Language* 90(4). E180-e226. [sections 1, 2, 4, 5, and 8].
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Lecture 3 (May 15): Word order and movement

- Travis, Lisa. 2006. VP-, D^o-movement languages. In Raffaella Zanuttini, Héctor Campos, Elena Herburger, Paul Portner, eds. *Crosslinguistic research in syntax and semantics: Negation, tense, and clausal architecture*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press. 127-147.

Lecture 4 (May 17): Null subjects and verbal inflection

- Barbosa, Pilar. 2011. *Pro-drop and theories of pro in the Minimalist Program. Part 1. Language and Linguistics Compass* 5/8: 551-570. [sections 1, 3-5].
 - Barbosa, Pilar. 2011. *Pro-drop and theories of pro in the Minimalist Program. Part 2. Language and Linguistics Compass* 5/8: 571-587.
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Lecture 5 (May 22): Polysynthesis and noun incorporation

- Mithun, Marianne. 1992. Typology and deep genetic relations in North America. In Edgar Polomé and Werner Winter, eds. *Reconstructing languages and cultures*. The Hague: Mouton de Gruyter. 91-108.

Lecture 6 (May 24): Midterm and writing workshop – no readings

Lecture 7 (May 29): Case and ergativity

- Song, Jae Jung. 2015. Case marking. (Chapter 3). In *Linguistic typology: Morphology and syntax*. New York: Routledge. 138-210. [read to p156, section 3.5]

Lecture 8 (May 31): Argument structure

- Kittilä, Seppo. 2010. Transitivity typology. In Jae Jung Song, ed. *The Oxford handbook of linguistic typology*. Oxford: Oxford UP. 346-367.
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Lecture 9 (June 5): Clitics and wordhood

- Julien, Marit. 2002. The concept of ‘word’. (Section 1.4). In *Syntactic heads and word formation*. Oxford Studies in Comparative Syntax. Oxford: Oxford UP. 16-41.

Lecture 10 (June 7): The UG debate

- Dąbrowska, Ewa. 2015. What exactly is Universal Grammar, and has anyone seen it? *Frontiers in Psychology* 6: 852.
 - Boxell, Oliver. 2016. The Place of Universal Grammar in the Study of Language and Mind: A Response to Dąbrowska (2015). *Open Linguistics* 2: 352-372.
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Lecture 11 (June 12): Presentations – no readings

Lecture 12 (June 14): Language endangerment and revitalization

- Hinton, Leanne. 2003. Language revitalization. *Annual review of applied linguistics* 23: 44-57.
 - Pine, Aidan and Mark Turin. 2017. Language revitalization. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford UP.
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Supplementary readings will be noted in the lecture slides – you are not required to read these, but they may be helpful if you are curious about one of the topics or plan to pursue a related issue for your final paper. In some cases, a simpler (textbook-level) reading is listed in case you are having trouble understanding the main reading.

5. Policies

Contact/Email: Please use "LIN306" in the subject line when corresponding with the instructor by email. Please include your full name in the body of the email. Questions about course content should be raised in class or during office hours. Emails will normally be answered by the end of the next business day.

Late work: Assignments are due at the beginning of class. They can also be submitted early in the course dropbox in the Linguistics department. If you need to make arrangements to submit an assignment late, you *must* contact the instructor and we must agree on alternate arrangements *before* the original due date. In the case of unforeseeable emergencies where prior arrangements cannot be made, you must provide the appropriate documentation (see below) within five business days. Extensions and make-ups will not be granted for in-class/participation work.

Accommodations and Medical Certificates: If you need to miss a test or assignment for medical reasons, you should immediately communicate this to the instructor in person or by e-mail, and you must submit the *Verification of Student Illness or Injury Form*, completed by U of T Health Services or your family physician, within five business days. The form must be completed at the time of illness or injury, not after the fact. The form can be found online at <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/index.htm>. Please note that completion of the form does not guarantee exemption from your academic obligations; students will be expected to complete course requirements in the case of mild or negligible illnesses. Physicians may be contacted to verify the validity of the certificate, and suspicious medical certificates will be forwarded to the Office of Student Academic Integrity.

Assignment Guidelines: All written homework (research activity, data reports, final paper and proposal) should be typed and stapled. Typed work should be in 12-point font with 1-inch margins, double-spaced. You should follow the citations guidelines posted on Quercus. You are encouraged to print double-sided. For in-class writing, please bring your own lined paper to write on.

Grading policy: The Department of Linguistics grading policy is available at: <https://linguistics.utoronto.ca/forms/lin-dept-grading-policy.pdf>

The following table shows what the grades mean. Note that grades within the C range and higher are considered acceptable.

Percentage	Grade	GPA	Definition
80-100%	A- / A / A+	3.7-4.0	Excellent
70-79%	B- / B / B+	2.7-3.3	Good
60-69%	C- / C / C+	1.7-2.3	Adequate
50-59%	D- / D / D+	0.7-1.3	Marginal
0-49%	F	0.0	Inadequate

Regrading Requests: Requests for re-grading must be submitted to the instructor or TA in writing within a week of the test or assignment being returned, along with the test or assignment in question. Re-grading requests for answers written in pencil or that otherwise look modified will not be accepted.

Academic Honesty: Academic integrity is important for maintaining the value of your degree in a way that is fair for everyone. Students who cheat or plagiarize lose the opportunity to learn, and undermine the learning experience of their classmates. Students are expected to understand university policy on academic dishonesty, and to be familiar with the MLA guidelines on plagiarism. Assume that all assigned work must be completed individually unless otherwise specified. Cheating, plagiarism, or representing other people's work as your own will severely affect your academic standing. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Department of Linguistics and the Office of Student Academic Integrity. For information on what constitutes an academic offence, you can visit the following link:

<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/The-rules/what-is-academic-misconduct>.

See also the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters at:

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>.

For tips on avoiding plagiarism, consult: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>.

6. Other Materials and Extra Help

Please feel free to come to office hours (listed above) to discuss lecture or reading content, or to receive additional feedback on any assignments, either before or after submission.

LINGUISTIC RESOURCES

- **Journals:** *Language and Linguistics Compass*, *Linguistic Typology*, *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, *Linguistic Variation*
- **Syntactic Structure of the World's Languages:** <http://sswl.railsplayground.net/>
- **World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS):** <http://wals.info>
- **Leipzig Glossing Rules:** <http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php>
- **Ethnologue:** <http://www.ethnologue.com/> (may have access issues)

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Writing support centers:

- Writing centres at St. George: <http://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science/>. Students may book up to two appointments per week. Note that Trinity College writing centre is closed for the summer.
- English Language Learning programs/workshops: <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>

Other writing/reading support:

- For advice on how to read critically and maximize your understanding: <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/researching/>
- For advice on citations, references, and avoiding plagiarism: <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/>
- Other writing advice: <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/>
- The Academic Success Centre: <https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc>
- You are welcome to discuss readings in the Discussion Board on Quercus (though this will not be moderated by the instructors), or in other peer-arranged support groups. If the Discussion Board is used inappropriately, it will be shut down.
- Various other resources will be posted on Quercus throughout the term.

Accessibility

- Accessibility Services @ UofT: <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>
- Get in contact with the instructors asap about any alternate accommodations you may require, particularly for in-class writing.